

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0146

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: FEDERAL ELECTION PROSPECTS IN QUEBEC

REF: 1977 MONTREAL 2064

1. FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF LIBERAL PARTY'S CHANCES IN QUEBEC IN NEW
FEDERAL ELECTION HAVE BEEN PROVIDED TO US IN CONFIDENCE BY ROBERT POI
RIER,
WHO HAS BEEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTION OF THE QUEBEC BRANCH
OF THE FEDERAL LIBERAL PARTY SINCE 1975 AND THE PARTY'S
PRINCIPAL ORGANIZER FOR EASTERN QUEBEC. POIRIER, WHO PLANS
TO EMIGRATE TO THE UNITED STATES AFTER THE NEXT CAMPAIGN,
HAS STRESSED THAT THIS IS HIS PERSONAL ASSESSMENT RATHER
THAN THAT OF THE PARTY ALTHOUGH HE CONSULTED WITH HIS COL-
LEAGUES IN MONTREAL. HE FEELS THAT THE OPTIMUM ELECTION
DATE FOR THE LIBERALS WOULD HAVE BEEN IN JUNE, THAT THE
PARTY'S POSITION IS SLIPPING AND WILL SLIP FURTHER IF THE
ELECTION IS PUT OFF UNTIL FALL. LIKE MANY OTHERS, HE EXPECTS
(AND HOPES) THE ELECTION WILL BE CALLED FOR JULY 10.

2. POIRIER IS CONVINCED THAT THE LIBERALS WILL MAINTAIN THEIR
STRANGLEHOLD ON THE BULK OF THE QUEBEC SEATS. HE ANTICIPATES
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THAT THE PARTY WILL WIN BETWEEN 65 AND 70 SEATS HERE, UP
FROM THE CURRENT TOTAL OF 60. HE VIEWS ALL CURRENT LIBERAL
SEATS AS SECURE WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS:

-- PROBABLY SECURE: PORTNEUF, DOLLARD, LACHINE, ARGENTEUIL

-- LESS SURE: FRONTENAC, BEAUCE, CHARLEVOIX, CHICOUTIMI,

GASPE, KAMOURASKA-RIVIERE -DU-LOUP.

OF THE SEATS NOT CURRENTLY HELD BY LIBERALS, POIRIER FEELS THAT THE PARTY HAS A SOLID CHANCE TO WIN IN CHAMPLAIN AND RIMOUSKI, AND POSSIBILITIES IN LOTBINIERE, BELLECHASSE, ROBERVAL, ABITIBI, TEMISCAMINGUE, MISSISQUOI, RICHMOND, SHEFFORD, JOLIETTE, AND ST. HYACINTHE. THE PARTY WILL HAVE TO WIN FIVE SEATS FROM THE "POSSIBLES" TO REACH ITS OPTIMAL TOTAL OF 70.

3. POIRIER CAUTIONED THAT A LOT DEPENDED ON WHETHER FABIEN ROY RUNS AS A CREDITISTE. (FYI: ROY, CURRENTLY SITTING IN THE QUEBEC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS AN INDEPENDENT, TOLD CONOFF LAST WEEK THAT HE HAD BEEN APPROACHED ABOUT TAKING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE EASTERN BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL SOCIAL CREDIT PARTY, AND WAS "STRONGLY TEMPTED" TO ACCEPT AND RUN IN THE BEAUCE RIDING IN THE FEDERAL ELECTION). IF ROY DOES RUN, POIRIER SAID, HE WOULD WIN IN BEAUCE AND MIGHT HAVE ENOUGH IMPACT IN REGION SOUTH OF QUEBEC CITY TO SWING A NUMBER OF NEIGHBORING RIDINGS INTO THE CREDITISTE COLUMN.

4. ON THE NATIONAL SCENE, POIRIER PREDICTS A MINORITY LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WITH THE PARTY WINNING, IN ADDITION TO 70 SEATS IN QUEBEC, 45 SEATS IN ONTARIO, 12 IN THE MARITIMES, AND 7 IN THE WEST FOR A TOTAL OF 134 OUT OF A POSSIBLE 282. MCNAMARA

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